

# LEAVE NO TRACE ON THE KERN RIVER

## Sequoia National Forest Kern River Ranger District



The Forks of the Kern run on the Kern Wild & Scenic River is a pristine corridor, 18 miles long. You must take extra care when on this stretch of river.

Leaving no trace depends more on attitude and awareness than on rules and regulations.

There are seven principles of Leave No Trace on the river. They are:

1. Plan ahead and prepare
2. Camp and travel on durable surfaces
3. Pack it in, Pack it out
4. Properly dispose of what you can't pack out
5. Leave what you find
6. Minimize use and impact of fire
7. Be considerate of others

These principles are a guide to minimizing the impact of your visit on the river corridor.

### PLAN AHEAD AND PREPARE

Planning for camping in a pristine area will help you have the proper skills, equipment, and information to enjoy the experience. Planning ahead will also ensure that you will know the regulations and hazards that pertain to the river.

### Repackage Food

Plan your meals carefully to reduce waste and leftovers. Repackaging food into reusable containers or plastic bags will reduce the amount of trash you generate while at the river.

### Equipment

Plan on using a camp stove to cook your meals. Make sure that you have a California campfire permit. Bring all necessary equipment for washing dishes, straining dishwater, and carrying out trash and human waste. Take everything you need to be safe on the river.

### Know the Area

Be familiar with the weather and water conditions. A river map is extremely helpful in determining where to camp. Learn about local regulations before you head to the put-in; this will add to your safety, enjoyment, and ability to Leave No Trace.

### CAMP AND TRAVEL ON DURABLE SURFACES

Selecting an appropriate campsite is an important aspect of minimum impact river use. Always use established sites and beaches when available. However, campsites and/or campfires are not allowed within 100 feet of the river's edge, tributaries and system trails. Where terrain does not permit a 100 foot setback, camping and/or campfires will not be allowed closer than 25 feet.

When selecting a kitchen site, pick the most resistant location possible, because this is where people are going to congregate. A large sandy beach is best. It is very resistant to impact and close to the boats so you won't create trails hauling gear through the brush.



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## **Spread Use in Pristine Areas**

There may be times when you are forced to select a site above the high water line where no one has camped before. In a pristine site you should spread use over a large area, avoid repetitive traffic routes, and move camp every night. The kitchen in this type of camp should be on durable, hard surfaces or beach sand.

## **PACK IT IN, PACK IT OUT**

All trash and garbage should be packed out. Burning or burying are ineffective and inappropriate methods of disposal. Keeping food waste away from wildlife is important so they will not become habituated to garbage as a food source.

## **PROPERLY DISPOSE OF WHAT YOU CAN'T PACK OUT**

Human waste disposal presents a unique problem on river corridors. Because of the high concentration of use on a narrow strip of land it is simply not acceptable to leave solid body waste within the river corridor. Carry out all human waste. All boating parties should carry a portable, reusable toilet system that can be flushed out at a proper waste facility, such as an RV dump station.

## **LEAVE WHAT YOU FIND**

Allow others the sense of discovery by leaving rocks, plants, archaeological artifacts and other objects of interest as you find them. It is illegal to remove archeological artifacts.

On all sites, leave the area as you found it. Do not dig trenches for tents or construct lean-tos, tables, chairs or other "improvements."

**Respect wildlife.** River runners have the potential to greatly impact wildlife. When approaching any wildlife on the river, always remain quiet, stay in the boats, move to the other side of the river, and keep moving. Never feed animals or leave food scraps where they might be eaten.

## **MINIMIZE USE AND IMPACT OF FIRE**

Campfires were once a necessary part of camping; now their use is steeped in history and tradition. The only foolproof way to avoid impact from fire is not to build one. Always carry a gas or propane stove to cook your meals.

**Use a fire pan.** If you decide to use a campfire, keep it small and always contain it in a fire pan. A fire pan can be an oil drain pan, a small barrel cut in half or a back yard barbecue grill. There are also commercial fire pans on the market. Bring your own wood or use charcoal.

Carry out all ash and charcoal. Burn your fire down to white ash, let it cool completely, and pack out all of the ash.

## **BE CONSIDERATE OF OTHERS**

Many people go on river trips to enjoy the peace and solitude that a wilderness setting can provide. Being considerate of others and practicing good river etiquette will ensure that everyone enjoys their stay on the river.

Sound travels easily in river corridors so keep noise level in camp to a minimum. Also be aware of your noise level while you float by other groups' camps. Friendly hellos are always appropriate.

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